



THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10007

CHRISTINE C. QUINN
SPEAKER

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June 11, 2012

Mark W. Lauria, Ph.D.
Executive Director
New York State Association of Independent Schools
17 Elk Street (First Floor)
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Dr. Lauria:

As your office is surely aware, recent reports have surfaced that detail extensive sexual abuse at The Horace Mann School during the years 1978-1994. I find these reports deeply troubling, and I am sure you share my concern.

Reports indicate that the school failed to provide appropriate support to victims, both those who were brave enough to come forward with their abuse and those who remained silent out of fear and intimidation. This neglect further victimized youth who had already suffered unimaginable mistreatment and exploitation.

I am writing to seek information that will explain whether the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) issues guidance to its schools about how, when they receive reports of abuse, they meet the needs of the victim as well as protect the rest of the student body, and make other students feel like they are able to come forward. Toward this end, I call on NYSAIS to develop a clear protocol for how private schools should handle reports of sexual abuse in their institutions. I understand that these schools are required to comply with state law, which requires anyone who is a mandated reporter to report suspected child abuse.

That said, I seek clarification on the following points:

- How does NYSAIS guide their member schools in handling this delicate and important issue?
- In addition to relevant state law, are schools required to develop and/or follow any additional steps or protocol?

- What action is taken to make administrators and educators aware of existing policies around handling sexual abuse?
- What are the steps for conducting background checks for private school teachers, and is that procedure the same for all schools?
- Is there any oversight to ensure the background checks are appropriately conducted?
- What follow-up action is taken after inappropriate conduct is reported?
- Furthermore, what action is taken if such conduct is confirmed? For example, are counseling or other services offered and provided to the victim and/or other students?

Private schools are not above the law and neither are those who prey on innocent youth. To the contrary, both schools and educators are entrusted with the care and protection of their students. We must make every effort to ensure they are upholding this responsibility, and that appropriate action is taken if they fail to do so.

I thank you for your assistance in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine C. Quinn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Christine C. Quinn
Speaker